

TWIN CITY LINES

Spring 2019





The lower portal of the Selby Tunnel (or Subway, as TCRT called it). The 1910-vintage postcard view shows the houses and the parallel Selby Avenue roadway that later disappeared, but we don't know exactly when. Below: Bob Mehlenbeck photo. Right: Sandy Goodrick photo.



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Corrections and new info

In the Ed Nelson's load check story, a couple of lines in the page 5 tables for the Chicago-Penn and Broadway lines were incorrect. Here are the correct numbers:

Chicago-Penn line

	5-6AM	6-7	7-8	8-9
Streetcars	3	10	21	16

Broadway line

	5-6AM	6-7	7-8	8-9
Streetcars	1	4	5	4
Frequency	60	15	12	15

Thanks to Russ Olson for explaining that the 1947 check was taken at Broadway & Irving because Ed Nelson lived nearby.

The 1885-1886 map on page 15 incorrectly shows abandoned track on 24th Street between Bloomington and Cedar Avenues. It should be on Franklin Avenue.

The Selby-Lake line

-Aaron Isaacs

Prominent among the heaviest streetcar lines was the Selby-Lake. A radial route feeding downtown St. Paul, it crossed the Mississippi to become the busiest crosstown in Minneapolis.

The St. Paul end of the line was literally the first horsecar in the Twin Cities, extending the length of 4th Street through downtown in 1872. However, service to the high hill west of downtown didn't arrive until 1879, and then not via Selby Avenue. The grade was simply too steep for horse-cars, so the line took a circuitous lower

grade route via Iglehart, Nelson and Western Avenues. In 1882-1883 the line was extended west on Laurel Avenue to Dale Street, south on Dale to Grand Avenue and west on Dale to Victoria. By doing so, horsecars served the inner portions of the Selby and Grand Avenue neighborhoods.

The Selby cable car line was built in 1887 and opened in 1888. It replaced horsecars on 4th Street, climbed the 16 percent grade to reach Selby, and extended to St. Albans, a block west of Dale Street. A combined carhouse and power house was built at Dale. This allowed the circuitous horsecar line to be removed, except for the portion on Grand Avenue. That was connected to downtown by a new horsecar line that climbed the bluff via the long Oakland Avenue (now Grand Avenue) hill.

The first electric streetcars in St.

Paul replaced horsecars on Grand Avenue in 1890. That same year the cable cars were extended out Selby to Fairview Avenue. TCRT wanted to reach the Merriam Park neighborhood just south and east of University and Prior Avenues. Beyond Fairview it was faster and cheaper to do it with electric cars. New track was extended north two blocks on Fairview, west a quarter mile on Marshall Avenue and north on Prior Avenue to University Avenue, where it connected to the Interurban, giving the line a western outlet.

The full cable car extension to Fairview lasted only a year. It was shortened to terminate at Chatsworth Street, two blocks east of Lexington Avenue. The electrified Merriam Park Extension took over the cable tracks on Selby from Chatsworth to Fairview.

To reach downtown St. Paul,

Below: Until 1907, when it was replaced by the new Snelling Station, the Selby line was based at the old cable car carhouse/powerhouse at Selby and Dale Streets



Front cover: This issue is devoted to the Selby-Lake line. A streetcar rises from the Selby Tunnel, with the Cathedral of St. Paul dominating the scene. The line was both a downtown radial and the system's heaviest crosstown.



Merriam Park Extension passengers had to transfer to the cable cars at Chatsworth. The cable line ran every 4 minutes during the day. Every third cable car was scheduled to connect with a Merriam Park electric car, which ran every 12 minutes. Cable cars scheduled to connect carried red flags and red lights at night. That arrangement continued from 1891 until 1898, when TCRT converted the rest of the Selby line to electricity. To negotiate the steep grade into downtown, the hill was converted to a counterweight to assist the electric cars up and down.

The Selby-Merriam Park line went about its business from 1898 to 1905. Anticipating a connection to the new Lake Street crosstown in Minneapolis, the Selby line grew a branch on Marshall Avenue from Prior Avenue to the east edge of the Mississippi River.

The new Lake Street Crosstown

Before 1905, traveling between points in south Minneapolis required an inconvenient trip via downtown including a transfer. For example, a one-mile trip from Lake and Nicollet to Lake and Hennepin took about 45 minutes. That changed with the construction of the system's first crosstown on Lake Street, extending from Hennepin Avenue on the west to 31st Avenue on the east. It connected with the St. Louis Park, Lake Minnetonka, Lake Harriet, Bryant, Nicollet, 4th Avenue, Chicago, Bloomington, Cedar and Minnehaha lines. Now the same trip from Nicollet to Hennepin took 6 minutes.

The new crosstown stimulated streetcar ridership while it changed the way the city developed. By connecting with those existing streetcar lines, all sorts of trips within south Minneapolis became faster and more convenient. A large percentage of the Lake Street passengers transferred to or from the other lines. In the process, they filled seats that had been vacated by downtown passengers who had already alighted north of Lake Street. Loads on the radial routes from downtown Minneapolis were turning over twice. Similarly, most trips on Lake Street were short and the loads turned over more than once.

The crosstown changed the city by creating business districts where the lines crossed. Passengers took advantage of free transfers to shop or do other errands at transfer points before continuing their trip. Unquestionably, devel-



Top: Looking uphill through the tunnel.
Bottom: Having taken its layover on Girard Avenue next to the Calhoun Theater, an eastbound car turns onto Lake Street to start the trip to St. Paul. Richard Andrew photo.

opments like the huge Lake Street Sears store would not have happened without the intersection of two lines.

The opening of the Lake Street line allowed TCRT to abandon track on 31st Street from 4th Avenue to Hennepin. It had been used to dead-head cars to and from 31st Street Station. Between Nicollet and Hennepin it was a remnant of the old Motor Line that traveled from downtown to Lake Harriet via Nicollet and 31st Street. The Lake Harriet line now used Hennepin Avenue, but TCRT continued to run an unproductive branch to 31st and Hennepin off the Nicollet Avenue line. Opening the Lake Street line made it superfluous.

Crossing the river

The bridge over the Mississippi, connecting Lake Street with Marshall Avenue on the St. Paul side, had been opened in 1889. However, it was structurally inadequate for streetcars. It was reinforced in 1906. TCRT had anticipated this. System maps from the 1890s show a proposed line crossing the bridge, but instead of continuing on Lake Street, it headed northwest to downtown, probably using existing track on Riverside Avenue.

On May 21, 1906 about 1.5 mile of new track opened from 31st Avenue S. to the St. Paul side of the bridge, linking the Selby Avenue and Lake Street lines. The new 10.8-mile Selby-Lake line was the third interurban linking Minneapolis and St. Paul, the other two being University Avenue and Como Avenue. The separate city franchises required passengers crossing the city limits to pay a second fare. While this discouraged some riders, it was a financial boon to TCRT.

The Lake Street bridge was perceived as rickety for decades. Streetcars were restricted to 10 mph while crossing it. Nonetheless it lasted

100 years until 1989, and initially resisted efforts to dynamite it.

Merriam Park

After the creation of the Selby-Lake, the original Merriam Park branch became something of an orphan. A separate Merriam Park line to downtown St. Paul continued to share Selby Avenue. From 1920-1932 it was through-routed with the Mississippi line on St. Paul's east side. Running a duplicate line on Selby to serve the short branch on Prior Avenue could not be justified. Starting in 1932, week-day midday service on Prior was provided by a double-ended shuttle car that fed the Selby-Lake at Prior and Marshall. Some rush hour trips as well as Sunday trips still ran through to downtown St. Paul.

The Merriam Park branch was abandoned in 1938. It was more or less replaced by the Cleveland Avenue bus, which used Prior between University and Saint Anthony Avenues before jogging over to Cleveland Avenue, a quarter mile to the west.

Experiments and other uses

A month after the Selby-Lake opened, it was extended to downtown Minneapolis via Hennepin Avenue. A look at the map quickly shows that this is an indirect way to travel from other Lake Street points to downtown and ridership didn't materialize. It was cut back to Lake & Hennepin a year later.

During the summer of 1906, a Lake Harriet & Minnehaha Falls line was run via Lake Street on Sundays and holidays. It was not repeated after the first year. However, in 1912 a summer Sunday-only service ran from Lake and Hennepin to Minnehaha Park.

The opening of the Selby-Lake was a boon to the twice daily Sightseer streetcars that gave tours of the Twin



Although it's carrying Western Avenue signs in this photo at Snelling Station, double ended car 1129 was assigned to the Merriam Park shuttle from 1932 until 1938.

Cities. It allowed a direct route between Lake Harriet and Minnehaha Park, which previously had required a trip back to downtown. It appears that Sightseer service ended about 1908.

Two lines shared the Lake Street tracks for short distances. The Bryant Avenue line used it for two blocks from Lyndale to Bryant. The Grand Avenue line opened in 1907 as a branch of the Nicollet Avenue line and traveled on Lake Street from Nicollet to Grand. That changed in 1909 when Grand Avenue cars were rerouted via Lake Street to Lyndale to downtown. It shifted back to Nicollet in 1910 and remained there until abandonment.

Selby-Lake was the only line with two online carhouses, Nicollet Station at 31st and Nicollet and Lake Street Station at 21st Avenue S. Not surprisingly, most of the Selby-Lake runs were based at Lake Street Station and crew reliefs were made in front of the station.

The track on Lake Street was handy for non-revenue moves. From Nicollet

Station cars deadheaded via Lake Street to reach the 4th Avenue and Bryant-Johnson lines.

From Lake Street Station cars deadheaded via Lake Street to reach the Minnehaha-Fort Snelling, Fort Snelling Shuttle, Bloomington-Columbia Heights, Plymouth-East 25th Street, 28th Avenue S.-Robbinsdale and 34th Avenue S.-N. Washington lines as well as University of Minnesota trippers..

Crews were relieved on the above lines by riding the Selby-Lake line between the car house and the lines.

Shop transfers from Nicollet and Lake Street Stations used the Selby-Lake to access Snelling Shops. The weekly supply car from Snelling Shops did the same. And every afternoon, a special car to take employees home left Snelling Shops, accessed the Selby-Lake at Snelling & Selby and traveled the length of Lake Street.

More and longer connections

As the years passed, Selby-Lake rid-

ership grew as the lines feeding it outside of the downtowns were extended and four new lines were opened.

1907 New line, Grand Avenue to 40th Street

1909 Minnehaha line extended to Fort Snelling

Snelling Avenue line extended from Grand to Randolph

1911 Bloomington Avenue line extended from 34th to 38th Street

Nicollet Avenue line extended from 50th to 54th Street

Bryant Avenue line extended from 46th to 50th Street

1912 Cedar Avenue line extended from 34th Street to 28th Avenue & 42nd Street

1913 New line: Oak-Harriet line extended from 44th & Xerxes to 50th & Xerxes

Cedar-28th Avenue line extended on 28th Avenue from 42nd to 50th Street

1914 Oak-Harriet extended from 50th & Xerxes to 50th & Penn

Cedar Avenue line extended from 35th to 42nd Street

New line: Dale Street line opened from Grand to Maryland

28th Avenue S. line extended across 50th Street to 34th Avenue S.

1921 Cedar Avenue line extended from 42nd to 50th Street

New shuttle line built south from Lake Street on 36th Avenue S., 34th Street and 42nd Avenue S. to 41st St.

1922 Chicago Avenue line extended from 46th to 48th Street

1923 Bloomington Avenue line extended from 38th to 48th Street

4th Avenue line extended from 38th to 48th Street

Grand Avenue line extended from 40th to 48th Street

East 25th Street line extended on 36th Avenue S. from 25th Street to Lake Street. Extended on the south end from 42nd Street & 41st Avenue S. to 46th Avenue S. and 46th Street.

Dale Street line extended on Maryland Avenue west to Wheelock Parkway

1924 Snelling Avenue line extended north from Como Avenue to Pascal and Arlington

1925 Cedar Avenue line extended from 50th Street to 52nd and Bloomington

Como-Harriet line extended on France Avenue from 44th to 50th Street

1926 New 34th Avenue S. line extended from 42nd & Cedar to 34th Avenue & 54th Street

1927 Bryant Avenue line extended from 50th & Bryant to 54th & Penn

East 25th Street line extended to the new Ford Plant in Highland Park

Snelling Avenue line extended to Hamline & Hoyt

1928 Bloomington Avenue line extended from 48th to 52nd Street

Chicago Avenue line extended from 48th to 54th Street

Nicollet Avenue line extended from 54th to 58th Street

1929 28th Avenue S. line extended from 50th to 56th Street

Como-Harriet line extended on France Avenue from 50th to 54th Street

1930 Fort Snelling line rerouted through new neighborhood on 42nd Avenue S. and past the new VA Hospital

1931 Bryant Avenue line extended from 50th to 56th Street

1933 Bloomington Avenue line extended from 52nd to 54th Street

Track and operating changes

Once the Selby-Lake line was opened in 1906, there were occasional minor track changes. The wye at 31st Avenue S. was moved to 33rd Avenue. When the new line opened on 36th Avenue S. in 1913, it included a wye at Lake Street and the wye at 33rd Avenue was removed.

Initially the Selby-Lake cars wyeed out at Hennepin Avenue. That interfered with traffic, so in 1909 a new wye was built a short block to the east at Girard Avenue. Cars then backed down to Hennepin where they took their layover and made convenient connections with the Como-Harriet, Oak-Harriet, Hopkins and Lake Minnetonka cars. In that pre-freeway era, Lake Street was U. S. Highway 212. Streetcars ran so often that one was always parked in the middle of the street, obstructing traffic.

TCRT's Girard substation, opened 1913, was located a half block north of the Lake and Girard wye. Work cars reached it via a short stretch of non-revenue track. ending in an additional wye that opened in 1924. In 1946 the Selby-Lake cars began using the substation wye, then laying over southbound on Girard at Lake Street. The track on Lake between Girard and Hennepin remained in place for non-revenue moves.

In 1922 a wye was added at Selby and Nina, just west of the upper tunnel portal. It allowed cars to be turned if the tunnel was blocked, which happened periodically when an automobile mistakenly drove into it, often getting hung up on the "tank trap" at the entrance.

In downtown St. Paul, the cars initially turned on a wye at 4th Street and Rosabel (now called Wall Street). In 1919 a loop was built around the block of Rosabel, 3rd Street (now Kellogg Blvd.), Broadway and 4th Street. That changed in 1931 to a loop around the block of 4th Street, Broadway, 5th Street and Wall.

Because it was so busy, Selby-Lake continued to run with conductors after most other lines had been one-manned. Conductors were removed from the owl cars in 1934, and from evening and Sunday service in 1950.

They continued on weekdays and Saturdays until 1952.

From the 1950 rulebook

"The speed of cars operating through the Selby Tunnel shall not exceed eight miles per hour descending on eastbound trips. Two minutes shall be consumed from the time the car enters the west approach of the tunnel until it leaves the east approach to the tunnel. During the day motor-men shall turn on lights at Nina Avenue eastbound and at 7 Corners westbound and shall turn off lights at the first stop after leaving the tunnel.

10 mph Bridge speed restrictions:

Lake Street Mississippi River

Bridge over the Short Line and approaches west of Hamline Avenue

More than passengers

From 1914 to 1919 the Selby-Lake carried closed pouch mail between post offices.

- From Commercial Station at 4th & Wall on the east side of downtown to the 4th & Market station by Rice Park on the west side of downtown

- From the 4th & Market station to the St. Anthony Hill Station at Selby & Dale

- From the St. Anthony Hill Station to the Merriam Park Station on the Merriam Park branch at Prior & St. Anthony.

- From 1920 to 1932 from Commercial Station at 4th & Wall to Merriam Park Station

The Selby-Lake passed the offices of the St. Paul Dispatch-Pioneer Press at 4th & Cedar, so it hauled newspapers, especially to low volume locations along Lake Street in Minneapolis. This practice continued into the 1970s on MTC buses.

Building the Selby Tunnel

Twin City Lines has already run extensive articles on the Selby cable cars (Fall 2016) and the counterweight that replaced it (Fall 2018), so we won't repeat that here. The counterweight was in turn replaced by the Selby Tunnel. It reduced the 16 percent counterweight grade to 7 percent and eliminated the need for assistance up and down the hill.

During tunnel construction Selby-Lake cars detoured via the Rondo Avenue line. To make this possible, temporary track was laid on Farrington Street from Selby to Rondo. On the west edge of downtown, another temporary connection was built on Smith Avenue from 10th Street to a block west of 7 Corners.

The industry press covered the tunnel construction and Russ Olson has copied articles from the Street Railway Journal, Electric Railway Review and Electric Traction Weekly. They give a detailed account of the tunnel's design and construction.

I had assumed the counterweight system was replaced because it was costly and cumbersome. That is true, but the Street Railway Journal reported that streetcar service had become so frequent that it exceeded the capacity of the counterweight. Work on the tunnel began in September 1906. It opened on August 11, 2007.

Here is the article from the Street Railway Journal, edited for length.

"The total length of the improvement required in the grade reduction is 1700 ft., including the tunnel and the approaches. An approach, 230 ft. long, leads up to the portal of the tunnel at the bottom of the hill. The tunnel is 920 ft. long between portals and has an approach 320 ft. in length at the upper end. The lower approach is on a curve with a 300-ft. radius, but otherwise the alignment of the

improvement is straight. The grade of the new track is uniformly 7 per cent, as compared with 16.5 per cent on the old track. The approaches are so arranged that after the backfilling has all been placed, the street will again be opened for traffic at practically the original grades. (Note: The street was replaced initially because a couple of houses on the hill needed access. At some unknown date the houses disappeared and the street was removed, along with the south sidewalk and the right of way was planted with grass.)

The approaches are between reinforced-concrete retaining walls, which vary from 3 ft. to a maximum of 20.5 ft. in height.

Above that height there are vertical, reinforced-concrete slabs, having a horizontal slab footing, and buttresses, 2 ft. wide and 6 ft. apart on centers, on the rear side. The approach to the lower portal of the tunnel is at one side of the street, a roadway parallel with it connecting with the street over the tunnel. The approach to the other end of the tunnel is at the middle of the street, but a 13-ft. drive was obtained on each side of it, so, on the whole, the street is much improved for highway traffic as compared with the old arrangement. The tops of the walls of the approaches and the portals of the tunnel are 0.5 ft. above the street grade, and are surmounted by a 6-ft. ornamental-iron picket fence, to prevent accidents.

The tunnel arch is 24 inches thick at the crown and the bench walls are 4 feet thick. The floor has a thickness of two feet.

The tracks in the tunnel have 80-lb. T-rails attached to creosoted ties with screw spikes. The ties and rails are imbedded in concrete to within 1 1/4 in. of the top of the ball of the rail, the concrete being finished to a smooth surface to form the floor of the tunnel. The floor between the rails of each track is practically flat, transversely, with the tunnel, and between the tracks is depressed only slightly toward the center line. Connections to a drain are made at

intervals of 200 ft. in the tunnel so the floor can readily be flushed clean, thus avoiding any difficulty from dust, or odors from refuse that would collect in stone ballast. At the same time the track structure is believed to be of such design that the concrete in which it is embedded will not have to be disturbed for a long period.

The construction of the tunnel was handled entirely in an open cut, 34 ft. in width, the maximum depth of the cut being 52 ft., and the average about 30 ft. The hill through which the cut was made consists almost entirely of a coarse glacial sand, containing some boulders and small stone. As the sand was practically free from clay, it would flow easily when dry. When the street was originally graded it was cut down 15 ft. to 23 ft. below the natural surface on one side for 250 ft. toward the lower portal of the tunnel.

A heavy masonry retaining wall had been built along that side of the street to hold back the ground, which continues to rise until a surcharge of from 10 ft. to 30 ft. over the wall is produced within a short distance back from the street. (That wall is still there.)

Since the edge of the cut had to be made close to the base of the wall piles were driven within 18 in. of the upper approach to intercept storm water and divert it into this sewer. Similar openings at other points in the approaches and the tunnel provide inlets to the sewer for storm water and for water used in flushing. The ground water back of the tunnel and retaining walls is also drained into this sewer through 4-in.

laterals, which are placed 20 ft. apart on both sides of the main drain.

The great pressures brought on the sides of the cut by the loose sand precluded any possibility of removing the bracing or sheeting as the concrete work progressed, without the load on each brace being transferred to another support capable of carrying this load. A system for building the tunnel section was developed, however, which not only provided for the transfer of the loading on the temporary braces, but also greatly simplified the centering for the tunnel arch.

As soon as a section of the excavation was made ready for the concrete, the floor of the tunnel was laid nearly to the tops of the upper layer of reinforcement rails in it. Heavy concrete posts 4 ft. x 4 ft. in cross-section, and reinforced with old steel rails,



were built against the sheeting on both sides of the trench at the same time the concrete was placed in the floor.

Timber bents (temporary falsework braces) were then erected on the floor in such position as to form a center for the forms of the walls and the arch of the tunnel. When they had been erected as far as the side walls were to be built at that operation, the lowest row of temporary sheeting cross braces between them were removed one at a time, transferring the load on the bottom of the sheeting to the concrete posts.

The inside forms for the walls up to the springing lines of the arch, 5 ft. above the floor, could then be set and braced at the top and bottom against the bents of the centering, the sheeting of the trench forming the outside forms. After these wall forms had been filled, enclosing the lower ends of the concrete posts, the concrete in them was allowed to set for a few days. The cross braces between the second row of walings from the bottom were then removed, the load on the sheeting carried by these braces being transferred to the concrete posts.

The arch forms were next erected on the bents of the centering up to a height of 11 ft., or just under the third row of temporary cross braces, and the walls built up to that height. When this concrete had set, the third row from the bottom of the temporary cross braces between the sides of the sheeting, and also the temporary braces between the tops of the concrete posts, could be removed and the balance of the arch built.

In all this sequence of operations no part of the sheeting was at any time unsupported. At the same time the centering and forms for the concrete were erected practically without interference and the concrete could readily be placed. The temporary braces were also all saved, although the waling timbers and sheeting had to be left in place, which would have been required in any case.

The forms for the tunnel had ribs made

of 2-in. x 12-in. plank cut to a template to conform with the curve of the arch. These ribs were each in six sections, a section on each side extending up to the 5-ft. level of the walls, a second section on each side extending to the 11-ft. height, and two top sections in the closing part of the arch. They were spaced 2 ft. apart on centers and were lagged with 2-in. x 4-in. timbers. Ordinarily the forms were permitted to remain in place at least 14 days before the centering was removed. The exposed surface of the concrete was all spaded carefully in the forms, with the result that a very uniformly good finish was secured.

The concrete work on the tunnel was carried forward in sections of various lengths, depending on the manner in which the excavation could be prepared. Backfilling was not placed on the arch until the concrete was at least 10 days old. The tunnel was designed by the engineering department of the Twin City Rapid Transit Company."

Additional info from the Electric Railway Review:

In order to provide for the draining of surface water a 15-inch drain pipe was placed below the center of the floor and drain connections provided at intervals along the tunnel. These drain connections consist of troughs extending across the floor and covered with iron gratings. The seepage water back of the walls is also drained into this central drain by means of 4-inch lateral pipes placed every 20 feet on each side of the tunnel. The central drain connects with the city sewer system.

In the floor on each side of the subway is a tile conduit of four ducts for electric wires and cables. Connections are made from these ducts through conduits in the concrete to the trolley wires and electric lights. Openings into these ducts are provided at the ends and center of the tunnel.

Two concrete mixers were used, one being placed at either end of the trench. The concrete was carried to place by means

of buckets handled by an overhead trolley system that was operated by machinery. About 12,000 barrels of cement were used.

The work of repaving the street, putting in permanent gas mains, electrical conduits and other city improvements amounted to 30 percent of the cost of the work."

Intercity circle trip

-Fred Rhodes

In 1982 MSM member Fred Rhodes was Minnegazette editor and published a big article on the Selby-Lake line in the March/April issue. Part of it related a Minneapolis-St. Paul round trip with his friends by passenger train and streetcar, starting and ending at his 44th and Bloomington Avenue home.

Compared to the relatively quiet Bloomington-Columbia Heights line with its standard front entrance one-man cars (and some PCCs) and 20-minute service, the bustling Selby-Lake cars were almost always crowded despite 5-minute service. The endless string of two-man gate cars in both directions on Lake Street burned into my memory early. Boarding through the rear gates and alighting through the narrow front doors was opposite the procedure on the Bloomington-Columbia Heights cars as well.

Passengers also passed through the rear bulkhead doors which kept inclement weather confined to the open rear platform. These sliding glass doors were removed from Twin Cities car during remodeling to one-man cars but retained on remodeled Duluth cars such as MTM's No. 265. The inside of the gate car had a dark, eerie appearance what with its side-mounted clear-bulb lights mounted on every other window post rather than on the ceiling. This feature was also changed with the remodeling.

Once aboard, we sometimes had to split up or stand until the Selby-Lake car reached the next streetcar line crossing, the Chicago-Penn/Chicago-Fremont line, eight short blocks west, where another transfusion of passengers would take place. This scene would be repeated as we crossed the Glenwood-4th Ave., Nicollet-2nd St. NE, Grand-Monroe, and Bryant-Johnson streetcar lines, clattering across a multitude of crossovers and switches enroute until we reached the end of the Selby-Lake line at Girard. A noisy ride, but music to my ears. Hundreds of people must have gotten on and off that car in that 2-1/2 mile stretch—an amazing line indeed!

We'd walk that short half block to Hennepin where we'd transfer to an inbound Como-Harriet, Como-Hopkins, or Oak-Harriet car, usually another gate car, for the trip downtown. Our ride ended at Great Northern Station at 1st and Hennepin.

A Switch to 'Heavy Rail'

Enough passenger trains were running in the late 1940s so that one could catch a train to St. Paul without too long a wait regardless of when one arrived. If we had to wait a bit, we'd have a bite to eat at the station or elsewhere nearby. We'd buy our tickets for the 10-mile train ride to downtown St. Paul for some incredibly low fare of 30 cents or so which made it competitive with TCRT's streetcar fare of 12 cents (another 12 cents was collected when you alighted after crossing the city limits).

Of course the railroad coaches were quite plush compared to the wicker rattan seats of the streetcars. Many workers commuted between cities by train on a regular basis for these and other reasons (quieter ride, express service, etc.).

After an enjoyable ride across the Mississippi River and through various neighborhoods, we'd get off the train at Union Depot in downtown St. Paul and eat dinner at a nearby restaurant if we hadn't eaten before the ride. Then we'd go out in front of the depot and catch our old friend, the Selby-Lake streetcar for our return trip to Minneapolis.

Back to 'Light Rail'

This also was an interesting segment of the line as it went up and down steep hills and through the only tunnel in town, the famous Selby Tunnel. The motorman would snap on all of the lights for our short "night ride" through the tunnel.

We'd cross the Rice-South St. Paul, Hamline-Cherokee, Rondo-Stryker, St. Clair-Payne, Randolph-Hazel Park, Fort Snelling-Maria, Dale St., and Snelling Ave. streetcar lines enroute. Finally, we'd cross the old, narrow Lake Street bridge across the Mississippi River which divides Minneapolis and St. Paul at that point. Today, four bright, shiny rails still grace the bridge, particularly the Minneapolis half. (They remained visible until the bridge was replaced in 1989).

One particularly interesting trip across the Mississippi took place during the resurfacing of the bridge. All decking had been removed leaving nothing but the relatively few skinny bridge girders and rails so that the streetcars could keep using the bridge. I remember looking out the big wide open streetcar window straight down into the murky depths of the mighty Mississippi far below. I think my fingernail marks are still in that window post somewhere.

Into Minneapolis, the car would cross the Plymouth-E. 25th St., Minnehaha-Fort Snelling, 34th Ave. S.-

N. Washington, and 28th Ave. S. streetcar lines before reaching our original transfer point at Bloomington and Lake for the final leg home to 44th Street. Thus, the four of us would spend the good part of a day riding the rails for a nominal sum of less than \$3. That was entertainment.

End of the line

The Selby-Lake line was converted to bus on July 11, 1953. However, it remained intact until November 28, 1953, because formal approval to abandon it had not been received from the cities. This also happened to the Chicago-Penn-Fremont line. To satisfy the city franchise requirement, one streetcar ran the length of the line every Thursday night. The tracks were also used for deadhead moves to and from Nicollet Station and Lake Street Station. The Bryant line continued to use the Lake Street tracks from Lyndale to Bryant. That ended on November 28 with the abandonment of Bryant and the closing of Lake Street Station.

The Grand-Monroe line continued to use the Lake Street tracks from Nicollet to Grand until it was abandoned on March 27, 1954.

The upper portal and approach to the Selby Tunnel were filled in and no trace of it remains today. The tunnel remains in place underground. The lower portal was blocked off to keep people out, but the lower approach is almost entirely intact, tracks and all, though deteriorated. In 2017 MSM erected an interpretive sign just below the intersection of Selby and Summit.

Located a block from the Minnesota History Center, one would hope that someday the lower tunnel approach will be recognized for the artifact that it is and restored.

Selby-Lake photo tour

We follow the line from Hennepin Avenue to downtown St. Paul.



Above: Although the line began at Hennepin, in later years cars wye'd a block to the east at Girard to stay out of traffic. This is a Como-Harriet shortline car backing around the corner. Note the motorman at the rear controls. Bob Schumacher photo. Below: A Bryant car, which used Lake Street from Bryant to Lyndale, has derailed turning the corner, thus disrupting both lines. Star-Tribune photo, MHS collection.





Top: An eastbound Selby-Lake clatters across the special work at Nicollet Avenue, a major transfer point. Behind it is a Grand-Monroe car which has used the Lake Street tracks for four blocks and is about to make a left turn on Nicollet toward downtown. Norman Rolfe photo.

Bottom left: 4th Avenue, half a block behind the streetcar, was the transfer point to the 4th Avenue line. H. B. Olsen photo.

Bottom right: Looking north on Chicago Avenue. This was the heaviest transfer point on Lake Street and also the maximum load point (most people on the streetcar) on the Minneapolis end of the line. Even today the Selby-Lake and Chicago buses exchange 3000 passengers per day at a transit center half a block north. Star-Tribune photo, Minnesota Historical Society collection.





Top: A fire has shut down the Selby-Lake just east of the transfer point with the Bloomington Avenue line. Star-Tribune photo, Minnesota Historical Society collection.

Bottom left: The 28th Avenue S. and 34th Avenue S. lines shared Cedar Avenue from Franklin Avenue to 35th Street, but they took different routes to reach downtown. South of 35th Street they split and paralleled each other through the neighborhoods east of Lake Nokomis. Wilbur Whittaker photo.

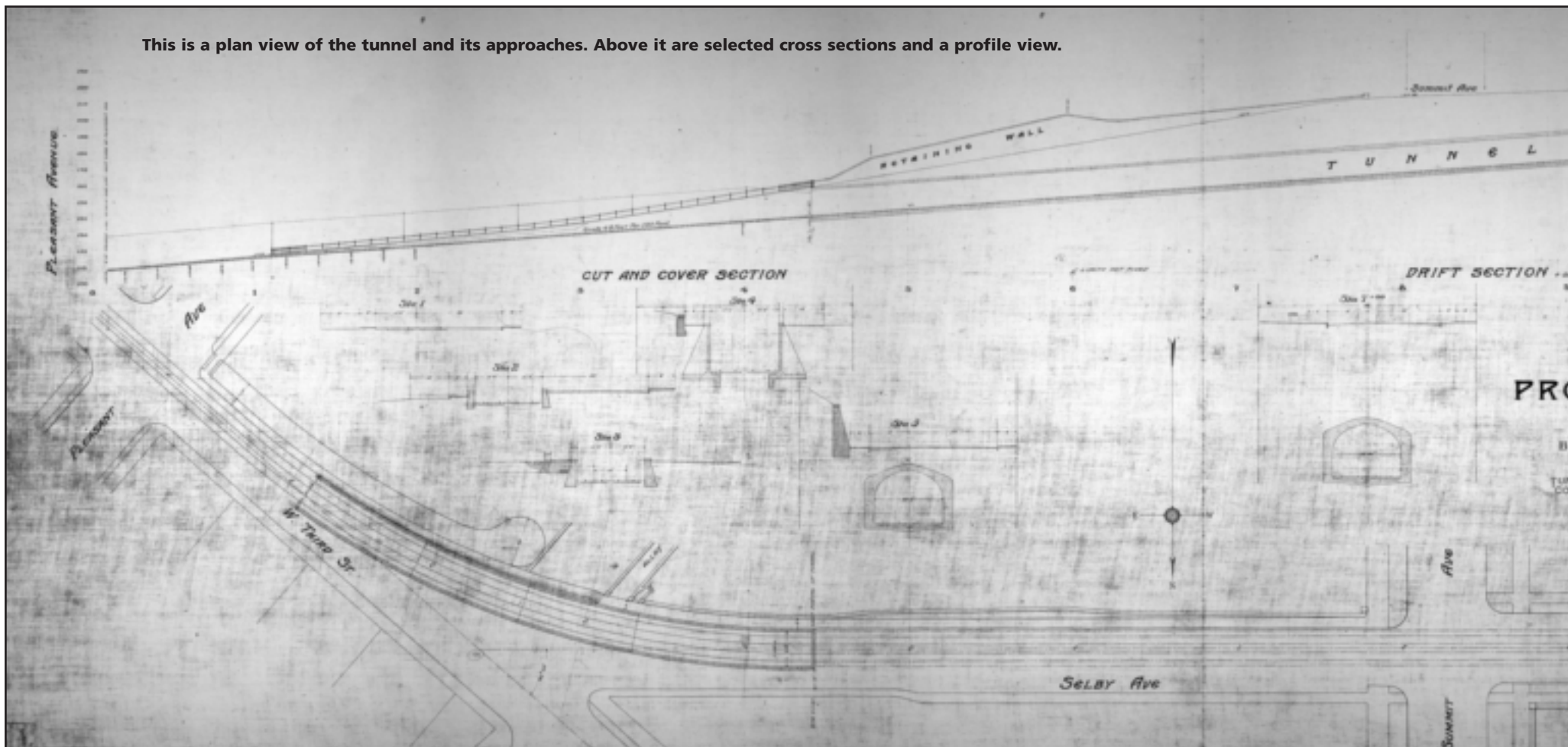
Bottom right: The Selby-Lake was run mostly out of Lake Street Station, located online at 21st Avenue S. Snelling Station supplied a third of the rush hour cars, but almost none of the base service. Robert Selle photo.

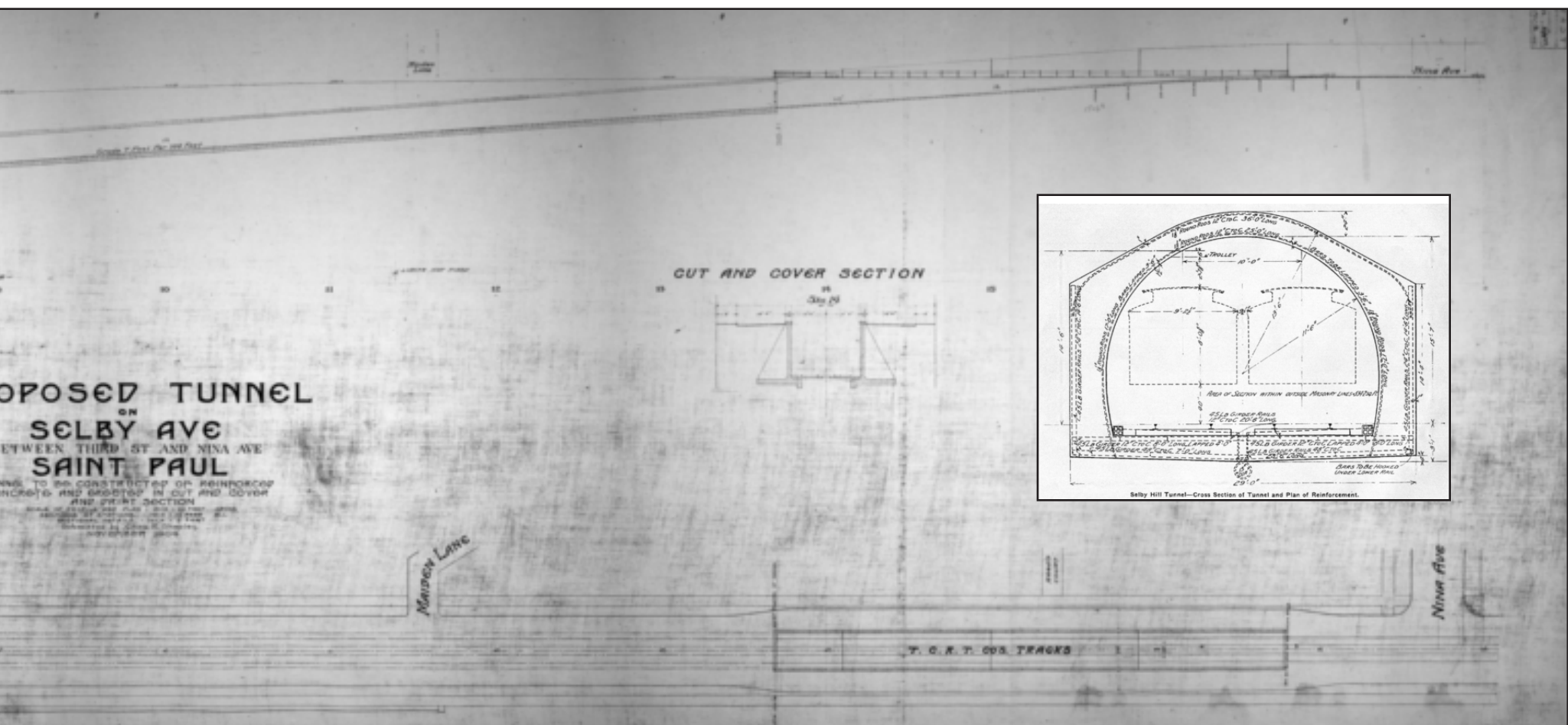
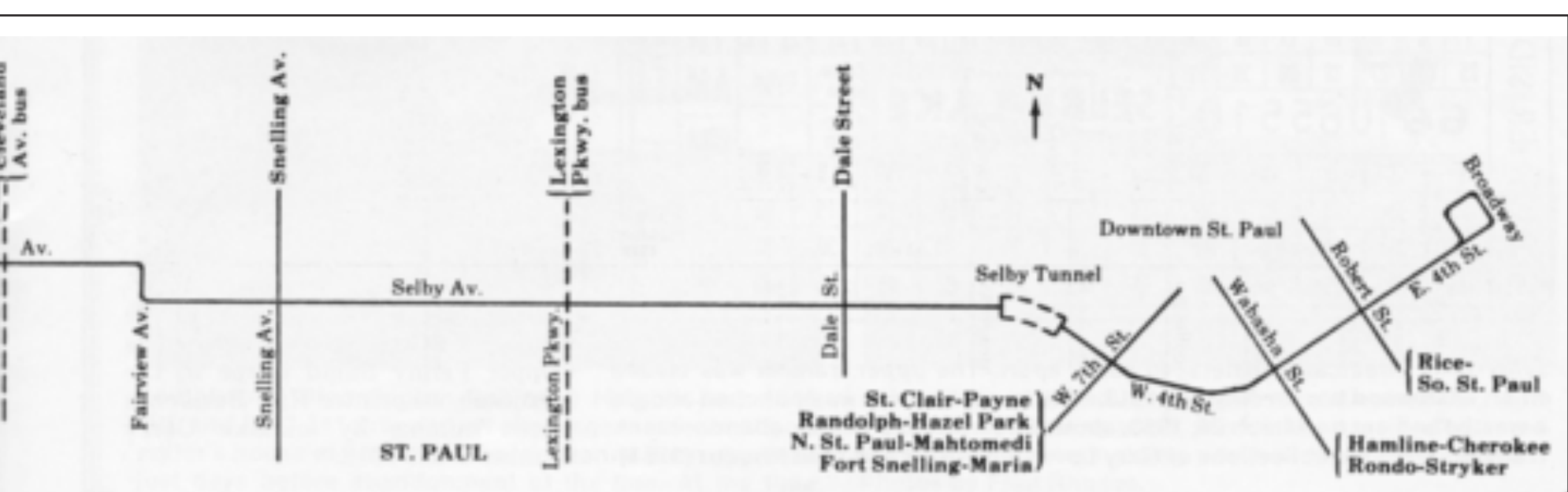
Lake Street cars used the Selby-Lake to deadhead streetcars and crews to and from several other lines.





This is a plan view of the tunnel and its approaches. Above it are selected cross sections and a profile view.







Top left: Just east of Hiawatha Avenue Lake Street crossed the Milwaukee Road's original main line to southern Minnesota.

Bottom left: A 1945 strike at the Minneapolis-Moline tractor plant east of Hiawatha has brought the line to a halt. Star-Tribune photo, Minnesota Historical Society collection.

Top right: The specially decorated military recruitment streetcar passes the ornamental iron store at 31st Avenue S.

Bottom right: American Rug Laundry is a Lake Street landmark that remains in business to this day at 43rd Avenue S.

Opposite: The last Minneapolis transfer point was, as is, the East 25th Street line at 36th Avenue S. John Stern photo, ERA collection.







Above: Streetcars meet on the Lake Street bridge. Star-Tribune photo, Minnesota Historical Society collection.

Bottom left: Marshall Avenue on the St. Paul end of the bridge was unpaved in this early view.
Bottom right: A streetcar stops at Otis Street, first intersection east of the bridge on the long hill up to Cretin Avenue. Dick Lukin photo.





Two views of the corner of Selby and Fairview, separated by about 40 years. The top one is from 1953 by Art Rusterholz.

The bottom one looks east around World War I. The common denominator is the commercial building on the corner.





Above left: Snelling and Selby, transfer point to the Snelling Avenue line, in the 1930s. in the distance is the ramp up to the bridge over the Milwaukee Road's Short Line.

Above right: A westbound car ascends the ramp to the Short Line bridge. Art Rusterholz photo.

Below right: Cars meet on Selby at Arundel, a block west of Western Avenue. Behind them is the still-standing Angus Hotel. Bob Mehlenbeck photo.



Top: Looking east at Lexington Avenue.



Bottom: An east-bound car descends into the west tunnel portal. Both Art Rusterholz photos.



Above: An eastbound car on 4th Street passes Rice Park about 1910.





Above left: On a foggy day, a westbound car on 4th Street passes between the St. Paul City Hall at right and the Lowry Medical Arts Building and Lowry Hotel at left. Thomas Lowry built them on the site of the original St. Paul City Railway horsecar barn and shop. Star-Tribune photo, Minnesota Historical Society collection.

Below left: Passing in front of the St. Paul Union Depot, located between Sibley and Wacouta Streets.

Above right: Originally Selby-Lake cars looped around this block via Rosabel (now named Wall Street, at right in this photos), 3rd Street and Broadway. The streetcar is taking its layover on 4th Street in front of the Gordon and Ferguson building, which still stands. Later the turnround was changed to 4th, Broadway, 5th Street and Rosabel. Today those streets circle the St. Paul farmers market. C. P. Gibson photo, Minnesota Historical Society collection.





Left: 4th and Wabasha was the transfer point to the Hamline-Cherokee and Rondo-Stryker lines. The Lowry Hotel is at right.
 Above: Cars meet at 27th Avenue S., transfer point to the Minnehaha-Fort Snelling line. In the background is the Minneapolis-Moline tractor plant. Both Eugene van Dusen photos, Illinois Railway Museum collection.



Looking west across the Lake Street bridge, which had a 10 mph speed limit for streetcars. Eugene van Dusen photo, Illinois Railway Museum collection.



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